

# *The* Commonweal

September 5, 1941

## The Psychology of Persecution

*Liam O'Connor*

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## THE COMMONWEAL

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# The COMMONWEAL

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## Starvation as a Weapon

IN ALL the talk about the four freedoms, the Hitler menace and the cause of democracy, the plight of Europe's conquered peoples seems forgotten over here. And yet with fall upon us and winter near at hand, the National Committee on Food for the Small Democracies, the one organization that is keeping up the fight for our starving fellow-beings, reports that things are rapidly getting worse. Belgian children get only one-quarter of the minimum amount of milk needed to assure bodily growth; disease is rampant. There are famine conditions in Norway and Holland. People are fainting dead away in the streets of Athens, according to the Greek War Relief Association. Undernourishment is rife among French children and adolescents.

Does the fear of aiding Hitler justify all this? In the first place it is highly questionable on moral grounds whether starvation of conquered peoples is a legitimate means of combating the nation that has overrun them. The destruction of the innocent—so as to prevent any assistance from reaching an enemy—is so great an evil in itself that it cannot be justified on moral grounds. Even if Hitler derives some aid thereby, the starving victims must be fed. What is criminal is the unwillingness of Britain and the United States, or Britain persuaded by the United States, to permit even an assayal with proper safeguards of such a proposal as the Hoover supervised food kitchen plan. How can the United States permit so many people in the countries defeated by Hitler to starve without lifting a finger and still pose as a champion of morality, democratic or otherwise?

People are starving, wasting away from disease, and we have the means to rescue them. The fact that Hitler brought them to such a pass by no means relieves us of our responsibility.

There is a spate of books these days on Germany. They reveal that as far as food goes Germany is not seriously hampered by the British blockade. The attack on the Ukraine with its threat to this year's crops indicates that Germany has foodstuffs for at least another year. And the more that is published about nazi ambitions, the more possible it becomes that they may welcome the blockade of conquered peoples. The more starvation, the more *lebensraum* for Germans; the greater the breakdown of enterprise outside Germany the better the chance for German industries when hostilities have ceased; nazism thrives amidst demoralization. Professor Pirson of Penn State recently declared that in the last war "the relief supplies went a long way to bolster the morale of the Belgian people in their passive resistance." It is at least a real question whether starvation, disease and death make for greater or less national resistance.

What is certain is the increase of malnutrition, disease, starvation in the conquered countries of Europe. What is clear is America's duty to save them. Once we have made this effort, we shall have some right to talk about international morality.

## Cauldron Bubble

INFORMED travelers from conquered lands in Europe arriving here all tell the same story: Hitler's "new order" tends to be a purely negative thing for all countries except Germany. It is freely announced in the press that large industrial areas in France are to be made agricultural; no nation in Europe is to be left with productive resources to fight modern war. That is the nazi formula for disarmament and peace. Undoubtedly such a formula rigorously applied would be successful. In all Europe, only Germany could wage war. But it means unemployment and the elimination of industries essential to any high standard of living. Very likely some realization of this is the basis of much of the discontent in the conquered countries. It has been suggested that the nazis are publicizing this discontent in order to slow up American aid to Britain; whether or not this be true, evidently discontent is growing.

Particularly is this the case in France. Sabotage, demonstrations, shootings followed by executions, threats, fines, arrests seem to be the order of the day, and of such we had hitherto heard little. The Vichy government does not give any impression of being able to control the situation; its own program more and more seems to be negative also. Its principal characteristic appears to be anti-Third-Republic: there is ever more talk of



the "national revolution." A straw in the wind: the cardinals and archbishops of occupied France, while calling for loyalty to the "established powers," insist on the autonomy of the French Catholic youth organizations—far and away the largest youth organizations in France. All in all, Marshal Pétain's lot, and the lot of all Frenchmen in France, seems to become more and more unhappy. It is therefore increasingly important that the US continue to have diplomatic representation at Vichy—a listening post, and a symbol of our desire to keep contact with a government and a people in bitter plight.

### *On Understanding Enemies*

PUBLISHERS' announcements for the fall indicate that the book season will be an expectedly big one for Hitler and Pan America. American book people have followed and will continue to follow with proper intentness Hitler's whirling *Kampf*, and we should certainly understand our enemy. At least we should know what he claims his reasons and purposes to be. They are, as readers of this magazine have known since long before he achieved final power in Germany itself, antagonistic to Christianity, traditional western civilization, the rule of law, comfort and the balance of power. His words are antagonistic to the control and development of America by Americans. The moral for Americans of all his words and works is not as simple, however, as many claim. There is at least one book announced for the fall which will undoubtedly indicate some of the complications: Trotsky's biography of Stalin. Stalin is another state leader responsible for an almost unending lot of words and for as effective action as he could get antagonistic to America. The certainty of the enmity of both to our way of life does not simply and in itself prove that the US ought to go right to war against Stalin and Hitler.

### *The US as a Market*

ECONOMIC COLLABORATION between the Americas is apparently developing along more helpful lines. It is reported that US imports from Latin America for 1941 are to date 65 percent above last year. Difficulty in integrating the two economies is perhaps best exemplified by the fact that today Argentina and the United States simultaneously have bumper surpluses of both corn and wheat. On the other hand the planting of rubber trees, in Brazil, Haiti and Peru, and the proffer of Argentine and Brazilian machine tools to help out in the national defense program point in the direction of integration. Even in the field of dance tunes several of the leading hits of the summer, viz., "Amapola," "Green Eyes," "Maria Elena," "Yours," were born below the Rio

Grande. It is all to the good that we are finding more and more Latin American things that we want. Perhaps in time this will lead to a due appreciation of some of the finest manifestations of Latin American culture.

Meanwhile the development of aviation in South America is helping to build up the commercial ties and strategic defenses of that vast continent. The new "air ferry" to Africa and the Brazilian airports to be built by Pan American Airways are cases in point. The recent promise of priority ratings for the Latin American republics on our defense materials and the prospects of surplus pools of foods and other basic commodities point to more comprehensive international co-operation. The situation is far from satisfactory, but our policy in this direction appears to be manifesting constantly greater wisdom.

### *Back to the Grind*

LABOR DAY to American youngsters is not ill-named, for it means that very shortly he and she will be back at their books and in their classrooms, grinding more or less conscientiously away at scholastic tasks. A full ten percent of all these students will be at work in Catholic schools; ten percent of America's vast bill for education will be footed by men and women who already pay their proportionate share of (public) school taxes. There is a generosity in this achievement for which our fellow citizens should be grateful. NCWC's Department of Education predicts the following enrollments in Catholic educational institutions for 1941-42: 2,034,000 in elementary schools; 380,000 in secondary schools; 186,300 in colleges and the like; 2,600,300 in all. Is not the weakest link in Catholic education the relative insufficiency of secondary schools?

It is a matter of general knowledge that enrollments in America's primary schools are decreasing, thanks to a decreasing birth rate. Catholic schools, we are told, reflect "the situation in all schools of the nation." The Catholic birth rate follows the same tendency as the nation's birth rate. Why is this? Are we to assume that Catholics are generally unfaithful to the teachings of the Church? Or is birth control not a determining factor in population trends? There is much evidence that the latter assumption has its own validity, that our civilization is a civilization which has within it deep-rooted seeds of self-destruction, in the long run more devastating than tanks or guns or bombers. The reopening of schools a little emptier each year should make all of us think about such matters.

### *Morale*

THAT the morale of the army is rather bad is apparently undeniable. Descriptions and explana-



tions persuade us that the problem is more than half internal to the army. Expansion was undertaken more quickly than the army could handle it; the officers' corps is inadequately trained and officers' politics is too widespread; equipment is insufficient and training objectives lack clarity. The unmilitary traditions of the country make the relations between the civil and military uneasy. (Many of these tendencies are exemplified by the Habinyak disobedience case.) One important cause of bad military morale which carries over into the general life of America is the lack of professional spirit, the failure to realize the dignity of jobs well done when they are subordinate to other jobs and to a general scheme. But the army morale reflects to an important degree, also, unsatisfactory national morale.

We are told that there is "lethargy" among the people, and few would deny that the country is not in a state of mind to put forward maximum effort for defense or rehabilitation or war or anything else. To what extent do we have to agree on foreign policy to overcome our lethargy and to achieve satisfactory national morale? What agreement is there in fact about America's proper rôle in the war? We maintain that it is possible to have sufficiently high morale without universal, clear agreement on war policy, and that there is both sharp and widespread disagreement about the country's proper rôle in the war.

In the United States it is definitely a minority who have taken on their shoulders the burden of the war. It is really startling how personally and as it were jealously most of the war conscious groups and individuals are devoting themselves to the war. It is a queer atmosphere which has not been described yet, but which cannot be gone into here. There are various propaganda committees, pro and con, spending energies and time and money with open hand, but the public is not determining upon a course with firmness. Tragically, even the relief and more or less charitable organizations do not seem to have root connection with the whole people. It is natural, but it is difficult and dangerous. Work for morale must be based on a recognition of the distracting question of what part the United States ought to and can take in the war. The question is not settled, and pretending or assuming that it is will not hide it from the people.

The technique of the administration in working for morale appears to be to get more flatly established the assumption that the whole question of foreign policy is agreed and settled. The President quotes Lincoln: "The fact is the people have not yet made up their minds that we are at war with the South." The newspapers say, "The statement showed plainly, Mr. Roosevelt said, that even a year after the Civil War had broken out the people of the North had not yet realized that they had a war to win." Thus the question

of morale is simplified to a question of making the people admit they are in the war. Generally the President does not speak in such all-out interventionist terms; he does not take as complete and simple a war stand as great numbers who support him. Cabinet members speak as a rule in more shooting-war terms than he. Legislators "of the administration" like Senator Pepper, go farther still. Recently, even the Supreme Court—Justices Roberts, Murphy and Black—have joined in the type of activity leading to the acceptance of full war status: about the final step in clamping down the false assumption that the country as a complete whole wants the US to be a full belligerent in the war.

The war party has a hard job. In order to fight effectively as a belligerent committed to do anything to beat Hitler and anything to bring complete victory to Britain, the nation needs a vast majority favorable to the enterprise. Those who want to keep the country from getting completely into the war can be successful if they maintain sharp division or widespread lethargy, even though they have no big majority or any majority at all. It is a practical advantage and a great danger and temptation.

Can an American oppose the full entry of his country into the war without wickedly undermining national morale? The war party tries to give the impression that that is impossible and actions and words of many opposed to the war which are in fact demoralizing argue against it, but we claim that a good citizen can rigidly oppose American entry while aiding and building national morale. In the midst of war, national policies everywhere have grown disastrously negative and over-simplified. The United States would fail miserably in accepting a policy of action merely against Hitler; we must work in favor of a tolerable state of the world and of Europe and America. The people know there are other problems besides Hitler. There are the essential practical and moral problems of means and ends—what means are legitimate in any case? what means involve through their very use bad outcomes, whatever the avowed purpose in using them? what means are effective? What is the relationship between Hitler and the secular trend, which reaches where even the nazi armies have not gone, toward the identification of politics and economics and all power and their centralization in the hands of one organization—totalitarianism? Who has the right and duty to fill out and give practical effect to the Eight Points? Morale cannot be created with such questions shouted down by the call to war. National morale need not wait for their total solution either. There can be loyal opposition. An honest recognition of our problems, worked over together decently, can bring solidity and the will to live and keep trying, a human situation which could conceivably spread.

# I Beard the Bard

An appraisal and reminiscence  
of Rabindranath Tagore.

By Theodore Maynard

**I**T WAS, I think, the worst moment of my life. Had I gone into a room and found myself face to face with a Bengal tiger, I would not have been so filled with horror as I was at this altogether unexpected encounter with the Bengali Bard. And there was no escape. I had arrived at the friendly house in Chicago where I had so often stayed before, having, as usual, done no more than send on a wire to say that I was coming. Though I knew that Mrs. William Vaughan Moody nearly always had at least one poet staying with her, somehow it had never occurred to me that this particular poet was to be her guest. Yet there he was; and there I was: and we were to be there together for several days. The prospect of the company of Sir Rabindranath Tagore froze me with terror.

If you wonder at this abject confession, it can only be because you have not had so much to do with writers as has fallen to my lot. Hell hath no fury like a poet scorned. And I had several times gone out of my way not merely to attack Tagore but, worse, to ridicule him. The only extenuation I can offer is that I was only twenty-seven when I wrote as I did, and that it was without malice. Anything my obscure self could say could not possibly do any injury to the Nobel prize-winner, then at the height of his fame. Nor was it intended to do injury. I was merely having a little fun, kicking up my heels as most of us did who wrote for the *New Witness* under G. K. C.

But Sir Rabindranath Tagore could not be expected to understand this. Nor could I explain it. My sole desperate hope was that a tactful secretary had prevented my articles from coming to his notice, or that he had forgotten the name of the ruffian who had treated him so badly. It was a very meek Maynard who entered the presence of Tagore.

My offence was really worse than I imagined. Only within the last few days have I looked up those articles so light-heartedly tossed off twenty-three years ago. Nothing but Tagore's recent death would have made me read again what I had written then. My memory of them was indistinct, as it was even by the time I met Tagore. For they were not meant to be taken very seriously. I might have forgotten them altogether, as I find that I had forgotten a good many things I came

across in the bound volumes of the *New Witness*. If they are dragged out into the light here, it is because I feel I should offer a more soberly considered judgment on the Indian poet.

Let me explain that I then had certain prejudices which my acquaintance with the man have largely removed. It was not that his extraordinary good looks, as shown by the familiar photographs, had aroused my animosity. On the contrary they overwhelmed me, for he was much more handsome than any picture shows him to be. Take the ten prettiest male movie stars and boil them down; and still their beauty would fall far short of Tagore's. But perhaps I did have the notion that a poet who looked too much like a poet could not be genuine. It is a sound principle upon the whole. For though Tennyson looked the part, of the loud-voiced, voluble Browning a lady at the other end of the dinner table had asked, "Who, pray, is that too exuberant stockbroker?" Most of all I had a deep distrust of oriental "mystics."

All the same, my animosity, such as it was, was directed not so much against Tagore himself as against his admirers. If he dressed in robes of soft grey-greens and browns, something of the sort was needed to go with those noble features and that long silky beard. He would have been preposterous in a suit and a hat. At least he did not wear a turban. What he did wear was entirely appropriate, as his dignity was completely unaffected. He did not call himself a mystic. He did not even seek the celebrity that suddenly descended upon him after a Swedish scholar, who had read his poems in Bengali, insisted on his getting the Nobel Prize. Rather, he was dismayed by the glare of publicity, and astonished by it. He would have preferred the seclusion of his *ashram* and the school for boys he had in India. But a literary coterie, with W. B. Yeats at its head, had pushed him into world fame, and the women's clubs of America, thrilled by his breath-taking good looks and his suppositious mysticism, gushed their adulation. That Tagore carried himself so simply among his feminine adorers is one of the best reasons for admiring him. And when I heard him recite his poems in Bengali I knew that he was a great poet. I also knew at once that he was an aristocrat in every fibre of his being. His bearing was that of a prince, or what a prince's should be.



*Not in English*

To my revised judgment about his poetry I shall return in a moment. But first I must confess that I am still unable to relish it in English translation. There its content still strikes me as thin and platitudinous and sentimental. Though I regret the tone of my *New Witness* articles—something particularly deplorable in the case of a man so magnificent and magnanimous as he turned out to be—I would not know what else to say, even today, had I not had the good luck to get around to the other side of the poet to discover him.

As it was on the basis of the English translations that I passed my gay and brutal sentence, I had perhaps better indicate what that sentence was. The first of my articles, which was a long review of his "Stray Birds" and "The Cycle of Spring," I entitled "Sir Rabindranath Tupper." With the "Proverbial Philosophy" before me, I amused myself by quoting passages from the now derided Martin Tupper and the then absurdly praised Tagore and challenging anybody to say off-hand who had written which. The whole point of view of the two men was, of course, utterly different. Tagore has, as one of his themes, the evils of Western materialism as compared with the "spirituality" of India, whereas Tupper got quite excited in his praise of Victorian civilization.

We travel faster now than Isthmians might;  
In books we drink from more than Hebe's chalice;  
All wonders of the world at one glad sight  
Are found in our luxurious Crystal Palace.

But Tupper generally avoided metre and rhyme and used the same sort of "poetic-prose" forms in which Tagore appears in translation. And both men were naïvely sententious. If my critical method was not very fair, it served to make a devastating point. And I made it ruthlessly.

Slightly less unfair was the method I employed in both my articles to criticize Tagore by parodying him. I was actually only parodying his translators, as I shall show in a moment, but I was unaware of that at the time. So here, for what it is worth, is one of my parodies. Though it was written very hastily—this sort of stuff could be turned out by the yard without effort—it was not too unlike what I found in "Lovers' Gift" and "Crossing" when I reviewed those books:

When the grey dusk bent down and kissed the jasmine  
and the oleanders;

And the lamp was lit in the house where you were  
singing a song full an ancient plaintive sweetness;  
When you took the topnote without unduly straining your  
powerfully melodious larynx—

I heard your mother calling me, so that her voice mingled  
mysteriously with the wind.

"Child, child," she called. "The dews are falling. I  
know that the stars are tenderer than flowers' bosoms,  
and that they are grazing, as the cows do in the valleys,  
upon the boundless fields of the sky, and that the reflection  
of the moon upon the water is exceedingly romantic—  
in short, all that sort of thing.

"But if you stay out much longer among your dreams  
and the drowsy scents of the *chota-hazri*

"You will catch a most unromantic cold. Come in,  
come in where love awaits you."

So I drew my shawl about my head, and wrapped in a  
mantle the stars, hiding them amidst my hair. For love  
ceased his shy singing as I crossed the threshold, and,  
having put aside his lute, kissed my forehead.

Not until I had heard Sir Rabindranath Tagore chant his own poems did I know that the translations had almost no relation whatever to the originals. I should perhaps have guessed as much, for I had been brought up in India, where everybody sings. I can still hear upon the dim banyan-shaded roads where I so often traveled in a bullock-drawn *vandi* with my father under starlight the sweet, melancholy lyrics—probably some of them were Tagore's—that other travelers ahead of us sang. But Tamil had been my language, and though I knew it had its own system of prosody (with the rhymes at the beginning of the lines) I supposed that Bengali poetry must be rather like the English versions I had read.

It was not in the least like it. Of all poets Tagore is the most untranslatable into English or, I imagine, any European tongue. The verse was at once sonorous and dancing. Double, triple and quadruple rhymes tripped in and out in a dazzling pattern. English poetry has an unsurpassable strength and majesty, but it lacks the lightness and suppleness of Bengali. I listened entranced, not understanding a word, but understanding at last that here was a poet. When one morning he showed me a version he had made of one of his lyrics, in which he had tried to preserve the Bengali pattern, I had to tell him, when he asked my opinion, that it was only by a false emphasis and a strained stress that the words could be put into that mould at all. At once he agreed. I have often wondered whether this was not his gentle way of letting me know that I was the scoundrel I now knew myself to be. Never did I read him any of my own poems. So far as I could I hid myself from sight, which was not difficult. Nobody in Harriet Moody's house had the slightest interest in me when Tagore was around.

Tagore in his "Reminiscences" tells of his difficulties with European music. He came eventually to admire it, but as an acquired taste, as our own must be for Indian and Chinese melodies. As a composer as well as a poet he has a fame in India utterly without parallel in the western world. Everybody sings his verses to his own musical settings, but few enquire the name of the author. The name is not important; this is a folk literature. In English the nearest approach to this case is Southey's "Three Bears," a story hardly anybody guesses to be his.

In the same way Tagore speaks of the violent impact English poetry makes on an oriental. It is startling, full of an intense explosive excitement,



though he adds that, when learning English, and first reading Tennyson, he could make nothing of the text: "It spoke to me more like inarticulate cooings than words." So also with my reading of Tagore—up to the moment when I heard him in Bengali. As Ernest Rhys says in his book on Tagore, "Unless [the author of these poems] is realized as a musician, one loses touch with the real spring of his verse." The themes are repeated over and over—love, nature, death—but are made new by the new melody in which (as in the words) minute variations suffice to renew delight.

Then, too, there are symbolic implications that are likely to escape us. A number of studies have been made, of which Sir Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan's "The Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore" is by far the ablest. He is eager to deny that Tagore's mind has been influenced by Christian ideas. All is the Indian dualism which so readily embraces the opposites of abstract pantheism and an exceedingly concrete polytheism. In Tagore's case he tries to show a humanistic synthesis.

Nevertheless a Christian strain is discernible in Tagore, as it is in Gandhi. Hardly any educated Indian can be unaffected by this, even if only by way of reaction. At the same time it may be admitted that, at its strongest, the influence operates as a color or tone rather than a form. It can do so all the more easily because of the fluidity of the Indian mind, its ability to permeate and suffer permeation, its unwillingness to submit to definition. In the case of a poet, as Radhakrishnan points out, it is especially difficult to pin him down to any intellectual system. "It may be said against this book," he acknowledges, "that the author is trying to find a definite meaning where there is none, and is confusing his views with those of Sir Rabindranath." Even "Sadhana" contains no systematic exposition of philosophy. "It is a sigh of the soul rather than a reasoned account of metaphysics." Yet as in the case of other poets, who as a class rarely shine as metaphysicians, philosophical implications no doubt abound. And undoubtedly there is also something that may be called mysticism, however nebulous it may appear to all westerners except those who think that the nebulous is somehow mystical. Certainly there is in Tagore a sense of God, although it is, as a rule, not immediate but approached through the visible world or by means of intuition. As it is all too vague for me to get hold of, it is something I cannot discuss.

#### *A fine poem*

But it might be pointed out that this leader of "Bramo-Samaj"—a reform movement within Hinduism which has much the same relation to it as Unitarianism has to Christianity—offers in what is I think his finest poem a moving tribute to Christ. It may be, however, that I think this

his finest because it comes closest to me, but I believe that the words and images become more edged here simply because of the Christian theme.

The arrogant spikes and spears, the slim, sly knives, the scimitar in diplomatic sheath, crooked and cruel, are hissing and raining sparks as they are sharpened on monster wheels.

But the most fearful of them all, at the hands of the slaughterers, are those on which has been engraved His own name, that are fashioned from the texts of His own words fused in the fire of hatred and hammered by hypocritical greed . . .

And the Son of Man in agony cries, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

That is something I can grasp because it has substance even if no great originality. If I fail to get hold of a good deal in Tagore's verse this is not because it is recondite—for that it never is—but because it seems to me empty. And I suspect that it was precisely this combination of emptiness and intelligibility that created his reputation as a mystic. The most stupid could follow him, the most silly plumb depths in his shallows. To Tagore himself all this did no harm, for he was a genuine person; but it did a great deal of harm to the crowd of yearning adorers. Because of the vogue he had unintentionally fostered the *swamis* and the *yogis* descended upon us and did a roaring business for a number of years. Tagore himself was of course the first to recognize these gentlemen as fakes. The trouble was that as soon as their vogue faded, so also did his own. But he had never set up shop as a mystic. If other people had cashed in upon his fame, he cannot be held responsible; if yet another group had read into him a significance that was not there, he cannot be blamed. It must have been with a sigh of relief that he retired to India.

What his ultimate literary position will be is something difficult to predict. Maeterlinck, who was born about the same time that he was, and who received the Nobel prize two years before he did, also lived to see his vogue pass into thin air. The self-deceived always take an unjust revenge. I, who was never taken in by the "mysticism," am now doing what I can to adjust the balance.

Yet after all, there is nothing that I can say except what I would say of the Sanskrit poems I have heard read aloud: I know from the sound that they are splendid, as one ignorant of Greek and Latin, hearing Homer and Virgil, would know they are great poets. But these, though like all great writers, are less than themselves in translation, they yield a residuum of strong content however badly they are translated. And Tagore yields very little in this respect. His poetry seems insipid and flowery, and his plays and short stories, which were once vastly admired, strike me as commonplace. It well may be that even in India a reaction will set in—in fact, I am told it has set in: there he may come to be regarded as too Euro-

pean, just as the Europeans have come to regard him as too Indian. That his English vogue will never be regained is certain. And here there is no great loss. The vogue was a mere accident linked with Mrs. Besant and the cult of her now forgotten "Star in the East," young Krishnamurti. That poor boy was lured into the rôle of prophet. It was not his fault if a lot of foolish women sat at his feet while he made such profound remarks as "A stitch in time saves nine" or "A rolling stone gathers no moss." In the end he was honest enough to announce that he was not an incarnation of Krishna. The fools and humbugs who trotted him out to play his part are the only ones to be blamed.

But Tagore never claimed to be anything but a poet. So far from regarding himself as a mystic, he did not even regard himself as a philosopher. His was not a speculative intelligence, though such ideas as he had were sound enough. He deplored the materialism of the west while respecting its culture. Without becoming a political leader, he made his protest against social injustice and (with moderation) against the Amritsar atrocity. It was on this account that he renounced his title of

knighthood—a dignified and courageous act in perfect accord with the integrity of his life. The darling of the coteries was very much of a man.

About his ultimate reputation in India, and among those who know Bengali, I cannot pronounce, though I fancy it will endure. In his own country his almost incredible popularity was not based on fashion. There people did not read him as an author but learned his poems by heart, and most of those who learned the poems could not read a line he wrote. He was not brought into prominence by the puffing of reviewers or the advertising of publishers; the whole thing was spontaneous. Peasant and pundit sang his words, to his music, from one of the lands to the other. If any tendency exists among some of the smarter young Indian critics to discount his fame, that is likely to pass. They are probably taking their cue from Europe. Now that he is being forgotten there, India will in time be able to forget the bubble that elsewhere was blown out so brilliantly and that burst with such a bang. Then Tagore may be rediscovered. People will cease trying to find esoteric meanings that were never in him and turn instead to the song.

## Homework That Pays

Whats, whys and wherefores at  
the Borsodi School of Living.

By Edward Skillin, Jr.

**B**AYARD LANE, a short winding black ribbon of a road, runs off route 202 about two miles east of Suffern, New York, and the main line of Jay Gould's Erie Railroad. It has an entrance sign so weathered that it is easy to whizz by it toward Haverstraw on the Hudson. The attractive homes it leads to can scarcely be seen from the highway this time of year, for the corn, shrubbery and sunflowers are high, the deep green foliage is thick. As you follow the winding road in, you will note that literally at every home or homestead the pavement ends. Whether symbolical or not, there is a marked division between the black asphalt of the lane and the pebbly, sun-baked, irregular private driveways.

When I reached the School of Living at the end of the lane and drew up to the fieldstone wall at back of the building, a fine-looking woman, who proved to be the school director's wife, immediately turned from her backyard chores to bid me welcome. She smiled warmly as she came over to the top of the wall and introduced me to Paul Keene of the regular staff, who was seeing off

a group of students. The School of Living Summer Session was breaking up. A score of people, the majority of them Quakers or Catholics, were leaving for their homes in California, Illinois, Kansas, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York City, Philadelphia, Texas, Vermont and Virginia. After six weeks of studying decentralist philosophy together, and of learning how to bake bread, make cheese, to grow and put up fruits and vegetables, to work in wood and weave cloth, to care for animals, maintain buildings and fences, not to mention taking turns at housecleaning and washing dishes, this group of kindred spirits was reluctantly disbanding. And so while Mr. Keene bade his associates God-speed, I climbed the walk to the white-framed school doorway.

In the background, seemingly within a good stone's throw of the Bayard Lane acres, lie the heavily wooded foothills of the Ramapo mountains. Nearer at hand were the half-hidden houses of the community, most of them built of native fieldstone and of exceedingly sound design. A fine looking brown and white cow was a feature of the



landscape. So too were the various patches of corn and even higher sunflowers. Down the hill from the schoolhouse, I was to discover later, lies an extensive garden of corn, beans, cabbage, tomatoes, turnips, lettuce, squash and other commodities on which the staff and visitors subsist. But Mrs. Templin did not like to see me waiting outside unattended and insisted that I come in. The famous Borsodi wholewheat bread was in the baking and I was ushered into the compact modern kitchen to see the dough (which looked like Wheaten to me) coming out of an electric mixer.

Mr. Templin and Mr. Keene soon joined us, and we repaired to the bright, airy meeting-dining room and took chairs around a highly polished long table. Mr. Templin, who has recently returned from 15 years of rural education work in India, is Mr. Borsodi's successor as Director of the School, and his features reminded me a bit of the actor Claude Rains. We were soon joined by Professor Charles E. Toole of Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, one of the 15 Bayard Lane homesteaders and now treasurer of the School of Living. The round table discussion began.

#### *Goats' milk*

One of the first topics we disposed of was goats' milk. Although I was brought up on the inimitable Billy Whiskers stories and was thus favorably inclined to that hardy animal, the beverage had never sounded particularly appetizing. There was little encouragement to be had from the reactions of that gourmet, Harry L. Binsse, either. At Suffern I found that there is a good deal of reason for the popular distaste for that extremely nourishing drink. It contains both milk and cream, as the two do not separate naturally the way cream rises from cows' milk. If not handled competently, goats' milk does have a strong tang, an unpleasant individuality of its own. Only if you are in the know can this aromatic flavor be circumvented. It seems that this is primarily the billy goat's fault; so much so, that people who have been around a buck goat for any length of time have a terrific job divesting their persons of his odor. So the first point is to keep billy and nanny beyond smelling distance. Next, the nanny goats must be kept clean and properly fed. It is also important to chill the milk while it is fresh.

Professor Toole told of a group of people who one night were served (every other one) cow's milk and goat's milk. The next night all of them had goat's milk without anyone being the wiser. This wasn't a case of gradually shifting the horse's feed to sawdust, either. In his opinion goat's milk is a somewhat smoother drink, and it is an established fact that it digests in one-third the time. There was reason for spending so much time on this question, for on a small homestead a two or three goat dairy is more practicable for the aver-

age family than a cow. A goat can be fed on from 4 to 10 cents a day, requiring one-eighth to one-sixth of the feed of an average cow; she is also much less susceptible to disease and, as is well known, can subsist on almost anything. "Two or three goats, if bred at different seasons, will supply the fluid milk needs of the average family throughout the year." Again, "if land and shelter are available, the total initial cost [of a goat dairy] need not exceed \$50 for one goat or \$85 for the purchase of two goats and the necessary equipment." Supplying one's own dairy needs is obviously one important plank in the Borsodi home production platform.

#### *Family savings*

Mr. Keene had at hand a little blackboard which showed in tabular form the various savings to be effected by carrying out the home production program. And Mr. Templin hastened to point out that the figures would vary tremendously as personal efficiencies vary. The school through several years of practical experiments has demonstrated that making all allowances for depreciation, interest on the homesteader's investment in place and equipment and for taxes, a family can by these methods save \$542 a year; if they do their own laundry, \$662 a year. Without laundry the extra work in producing at home requires 900 man-hours of labor. Taking the American average of some fraction over three adults per family, this would mean an hour a day new homework per person six days a week.

My informants did not seem at all amused when I ventured to say that it had struck me right along that the Borsodi program of the husband commuting to work in a nearby city and supplementing his modest income by producing at home meant that his wife had to do the homework. On the contrary my hosts stoutly maintained that in actual practice the men of the family do the bulk of the gardening and care of animals. At Bayard Lane the usual thing is for each family to have a small goat dairy and about 25 chickens. They have found that the average homestead, in addition to making savings so important for lower income groups, consumed 400 pounds per year more fresh vegetables than the average city family; and while the city family was eating 121 quarts of canned fruits and vegetables, much of this baked beans, the homestead family was digesting 431 quarts. Also the homestead diet included a much higher proportion of healthful fruits and vegetables. Quality, although not strictly measurable in dollars and cents, must never be ignored in these mathematical calculations. For the primary interest of these decentralists is in improving the well-being of those persons who participate.

When Ralph Borsodi started the School of Living, he had in mind the family with an income of



\$1,500 to \$3,000 a year. His 25-cent bulletins on "How to Economize in Buying Land for Your Home," "How to Economize on Milk and Cream," "How to Economize on Bread, Cake and Pastry," "How to Economize on Canned Food," "How to Economize on Fruit," etc. are written on this assumption. But the thousands who have bought his various bulletins and the 5,000 on the school's present mailing list have been from almost every economic stratum. The savings possible for the \$1,500-3,000 class would be even more important for the 60 per cent of American families that have to manage on less than \$1,500 annually. That is why, it seems to me, the School of Living is growing in importance, for it is a center for learning widely practicable and useful techniques.

#### *The school's equipment*

The trim of the attractive meeting-dining room is white, and the large wall spaces as well as the narrower intervals between the open French windows are filled with murals. At one end of the room there is a small panel depicting the smoke issuing from a gloomy factory with a city slum, at the other a large one representing a rolling expanse above the nearby Hudson. Mr. Templin called my attention to the symbolism suggested by the fact that the one mechanically propelled object in that idyllic country vista, a primitive steamboat, still relied to some extent on a sail to overcome the river current. Most of the other murals deal with real and imaginary homesteads in various parts of the United States.

The second floor of the school building, white clapboard above the brown fieldstone of the first story, contains several attractive bedrooms and baths; it accommodates 10 guests. The basement has equipment for a variety of important activities. Here one finds a number of hand looms designed for home weaving of woollens, linens, etc. Printing and mimeographing, pressing and laundering also take place down there. The wheat sent up from Peter Escher's biodynamic farm in Maryland and the home-grown corn are milled in the basement too, which also houses a cream separator. The fact that all this takes place in one small cellar shows how little space these handy implements require.

Biodynamic compost heaps form a prominent part of the Bayard Lane landscape. The soil was originally quite poor and is gradually being built up by this sound method of returning wastes to the soil. It was curious in this connection that in our walk around the garden we came upon a tomato patch which unexpectedly had grown all by itself on the site of an old pig pen. The animals had on occasions quite obviously fed on that important fruit. The size and profusion of these tomatoes put to shame the scraggly results of my own hope-

ful efforts with that commodity in a too-shady suburban backyard.

One of the most interesting plants in the whole garden is the Jerusalem artichoke, a sturdy green plant with edible roots; it had already grown to 5 feet in height. Mr. Benjamin Muse of Dunedin, Virginia, one of the School's board of trustees, who sent the plants to Suffern, says they are so hardy and prolific that if the government once distributed batches of the plants to all the sharecroppers in the land, they would never afterward go hungry, and yet they would hardly have to lift a finger except to gather them in. Mr. Muse, who has 250 acres near Petersburg, Virginia, is making a comprehensive 8-year study of human subsistence levels.

#### *Drudgery is out*

Across the road from the school stands Paul G. May's modest workshop, one of the most fascinating focal points of the whole community. Mr. May is experimenting now with a new type of electric stove and using it in his own home to check results at the family dinner table. The cooking process of his stove is much like that of the Swedish Aga stove. That is, it depends on steady heat, perfect insulation and utensils with bottoms so flat that they make perfect contact with the hot and simmer plates. In addition to hot and simmer plates, there is an enormous oven where temperature is even throughout. It takes Mr. May's stove one day to heat up and five days to cool off; it is going all the time. This 500-watt stove is ideal for rural electrification, where voltage is not high and where the loads put on local power plants at meal times by the present electric range would be far too great. Grants from the Bureau of Chemistry and Engineering of the Department of Agriculture support this experimentation and point to its importance. Electric appliance manufacturers have manifested great interest, too, and Mr. May seems anxious to get his stove into production; he apparently has no thought of personal royalties from patents. He also says that power companies would have to adjust their rates for this constant flow of current.

Another of his new gadgets is a log-sawer, with a one-quarter horsepower electric motor. The wooden parts are easily made at home, while the metal parts are available at a good hardware store. In the inventor's opinion it could be built from directions by any intelligent high school boy, and the materials themselves, motor and all, cost only \$20. This machine will save a lot of backaches in building up the family woodpile.

Mr. May's home flour mill is also powered by a one-quarter horsepower electric motor. It stands about 3 feet high and takes up very little room. The perfected model now sells for \$38 complete. Those who cannot afford this can procure a much

cheaper hand mill. The school's inventor also does a sizable business in making looms for home cloth production. All in all, his workshop is a focal point, for one of Mr. Borsodi's key principles all along has been that the development of the machine now makes possible a return to home production without much of the drudgery that used to accompany it. Here is one of the principal answers to the basic human problem raised by the subjection of modern man to the machine of his own creating. It is often said in a vague general way that man must be master of the machine rather than the reverse, but here is one specific means making advances in practical mechanics genuinely beneficial to humanity.

There are many aspects of what you find at the School of Living that set you thinking. The war has temporarily directed attention away from the national unemployment problem, but once the long-sought peace is achieved, that problem will tend to paralyze the United States even more completely than in 1932. There is apparently no single solution, but it seems obvious that unemployment would be greatly alleviated if considerable numbers of the idle urban dwellers were settled on the land. They could not simply be dumped on a few acres to fend for themselves, but techniques similar to those of the School of Living would have to be supplied.

Homesteading can be successful if the soil is continually built up by biodynamic methods, if surpluses of all home-grown or home-produced products are put on the market, and if they are processed as far as possible toward the finished product, before being offered for sale. Even for cash crops the School of Living is opposed to specialization. In all this Borsodi Bulletins have proved invaluable sources of essential and convenient information.

#### *Back to the land*

In getting people from demoralizing idleness in the city to self-subsistence on the land, Professor Toole says no one is quite so helpful as the county agent. He told of an urban friend of his who knew absolutely nothing about agriculture but decided to buy and work a farm. He was advised to get the county agent out to his place first thing. The official obliged by going over the whole place, telling what, and where and how to plant and offering to be always available for consultation. One day the cow wouldn't milk so they got the agent on the phone. "Give her a drink of water," he told them, and it worked like a charm. Within 8 months the fugitive from the city has developed from a comparative ignoramus into an honest-to-goodness farmer. Further assistance may be obtained from the free bulletins of the Department of Agriculture, from the Biodynamic Association of America and others. You can learn a lot if you're willing and know where to ask; county, state

and national governments give lots of free service in these matters.

When I brought up the question whether lone individuals could pioneer on a homestead, the consensus seemed to be that while it can be done, people are likely to be more successful if they establish in a small community—something from 10 to 50 families. Not only can there be such helps as a community power plant, a mill for wheat, a cooperative exchange and the like, but also community recreation and more satisfying social activity. Many of the savings indicated in the School of Living Bulletins can even be achieved by homework in a city apartment.

At one point in the discussion Mr. Templin dilated on the effects of home production on the outlook of the people who participate. He spoke of such achievements, with the new sense of self-reliance, consciousness of creative action, greater satisfaction in living they embody. As Mildred Jensen Loomis said at the summer session, homesteading makes for integral living. And in an age of narrow specialization it enables the individual to enter directly into a wide range of the basic processes of society. When this point has been reached, work is not drudgery but joy. Mr. Templin's clear blue eyes widened as he told of villages in the Himalayas where the natives spontaneously sing at their humble work. He believes that some of these distant communities have reached the greatest degree of self-subsistence, of successful communal life, yet attained. He compares them with the New England of town meeting days. But the organization of these Indian communities is more comprehensive; their democracy embodies economics as well as politics. Mr. Templin says that Gandhi himself is more interested in economics and decentralism than he is in India's political independence.

Beautiful as they are, the Ramapos must be a comedown after the Himalayas. But Mr. Templin and his wife and Mr. and Mrs. Keene receive virtually only their living expenses for staying on at the School of Living. And who will say that there is not an even bigger job to do over here, at this turning point in the course of Western capitalism. They feel the staff will be complete if they can find a printer and his wife willing to join the community on similar terms.

Recent converts to the movement are A. J. Muste and other leaders of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. These peace leaders believe a direct attack on the causes of war must be made by non-violent methods. They insist today that non-violence and passivity are not equivalent. If any sizable proportion of the capitalistic world is reorganized on a decentralist, homesteading basis, the tension resulting from the struggle for raw materials and markets will lessen and there will be far less of an uprooted proletariat prone to be carried away by dictator's promises or eager for



the adventure of war. The tragic cycle of depressions and war brought on by modern industrial "efficiency" must give way before the greater efficiency of using the machine to make life more abundant for both family and community. These are some of the ideas bruited about as the lively

talk goes around the discussion-dinner table at the School of Living. And whether you agree with them all or not, you recognize at once here a tremendous potential for rebuilding society at a time it never was more needed. The thing is to embark on a little home production of your own.

## The Psychology of Persecution

What is psychological war? How is it being waged against the Church in Germany and elsewhere? Can the nazis win?

By Liam O'Connor

**S**HORTLY before the nazis began their "holy" war against Russia, a cartoon intended for German distribution only appeared in *Der Stuermer*. It shows the German military boot smashing down on a plutocrat clinging to a bag of money. Beside the bag, in the foreground of the picture and directly beneath the descending boot, is a Bible.

This is not the first time that the nazis have admitted, for a limited public, that they are waging a war against Christianity. They have been far more reticent, however, about the nature of the struggle. It is not a *Blitz Krieg*; the nazis do not expect to destroy Christianity by armored divisions, Stuka bombers and parachute troops. They have a type of warfare more secret, more deadly in its effects. They call it *Geistiger Krieg*.

A definition is given in the "Handbook of Modern Military Sciences" (*Handbuch der neuzeitlichen Wehrwissenschaften*) published in Germany in 1936 under the editorship of Major General Franke, and with the sponsorship of the German Society for Military Politics and Military Science. "*Geistiger Krieg*—struggle carried on by the State by means of moral and intellectual weapons in order to strengthen its own prestige and to diminish that of the enemy; to preserve and further its own military power and to impair the enemy's resistance." The writer points out that this psychological warfare "need not coincide (in time) with actual military warfare. Often it will precede military warfare and will continue after arms have been laid down."

*Geistiger Krieg* is being waged against the Christian churches in Germany so successfully that the Pope's Christmas message of 1937 called it a "persecution of unequalled terror and gravity." The nazis have succeeded in making persecution scientific; they have methodically studied the psychology of persecution and then, just as methodically, used their findings for the complete destruc-

tion of the Church. They have realized that the traditional kind of persecution is ineffective. Christians could be turned into living torches at the Fuehrer's order, but the Christian idea would not thereby be destroyed; rather, it might be strengthened by the heroism of its martyrs. What the nazis rely on, then, is not physical but mental treatment; not the brutality of the soldier but the subtle attack of the psychologist. *Geistiger Krieg* is intended to secure its results by arousing as little opposition as possible; caution and patience are its watchwords. Those who fight this hidden war aim gradually to make the Christian philosophy of life seem irrelevant to everyday living, slowly to overshadow that philosophy by a new, vigorous and pagan way of life; their hope is that in a generation or so Christianity for Germany will have mere historical significance. Physical violence may facilitate the death of Christianity, but physical violence alone will not suffice.

Hitler has given this conception candid expression in his "Mein Kampf": "Any world-view [*Weltanschauung*] is intolerant by its very nature. . . . It imperiously demands unreserved and exclusive recognition from the Universe, and the complete transformation of public life in accordance with its principles. . . . The same is true of religions. Christianity is not and cannot be content simply to erect its own altars. It is driven by logical necessity to destroy those of the pagans. A dogmatic faith can only come to birth where there is a fanatical intolerance and this remains the inexorable law of its development." Such a world-view, he says, "can be demolished only by a new idea, absolutely pure and true, fed by the same spirit of fanaticism and defended by the same strength of will. . . . Political parties naturally lean towards compromise; world-views never do. Political parties come to an arrangement with the enemy, but world-views proclaim their infallibility."



### Strategy and tactics

The strategy of *Geistiger Krieg* is the same for every country, but its tactical manoeuvres vary with local conditions. *Geistiger Krieg* is also coordinated with military war and with economic war in the framework of total warfare. These two facts do much to explain why the Church has been given such different treatment in the various occupied territories.

In Poland the maximum use has been made of physical force. Cardinal Hlond, Primate of Poland, states that "Ninety-five percent of our priests have been imprisoned, expelled or humiliated before the eyes of the faithful." Church properties have been ostentatiously secularized; in Peplin, for example, the cathedral is now a garage, the Bishop's palace serves as a restaurant and his chapel is used as a dance hall. Presumably the Germans justify this contemptuous display of force by the low position of the Poles in the nazi hierarchy of bloods. It is also true that Poland is not highly industrialized and can therefore make no great contribution to mechanized war. But even with these people whom the nazis consider little better than dogs some of the techniques of *Geistiger Krieg* have been employed. Dr. Josef P. Junosza reported recently that the Germans are making attempts to break down Christian morality in Poland; they have set up gambling casinos for the native inhabitants, and they actively encourage the publication of pornography. In certain places the use of Polish—the only language understood by the common man—has been forbidden in churches.

There is no question, of course, of converting Poland or any other subjugated nation to National Socialism. That brand of paganism is strictly for the *Herrenvolk*. But to some form of paganism each conquered territory is to be converted, each in the way best suited to it and all in Hitler's good time. Among the paganisms of inferior peoples, National Socialism can assume the leadership; with Christianity no cooperation is possible.

In Germany the Church is being attacked with all the resources of *Geistiger Krieg*. It is true that violence is also employed. Priests have been beaten and imprisoned. Youth associations and charitable organizations under the control of the Church have been destroyed. The Catholic press has been systematically wrecked. Radio Vatican declares that "all religious institutions dedicated to education have already been suppressed and sequestered throughout Germany and the most venerated of monasteries and convents have been dissolved." Yet churches remain open and the Government continues to support them financially, protesting the while its good will toward Christianity. The discrepancy between actions and words is deliberate; one of the major objectives of this psychological warfare is to prepare public opinion

so that an act of aggression will seem necessary, or, better still, no act of aggression at all. While opposition forces are thus pacified or confused, the nazis carry on an unrelenting but circumspect campaign to devitalize traditional beliefs. At the same time they openly and constantly propagate a totalitarian philosophy of life that can triumph only if Christianity be destroyed.

On July 20, 1933, a Concordat between the Papacy and the nazi government was signed specifically recognizing the rights of the Church in Germany. On March 14, 1937, the Encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* declared that intervening events revealed "machinations that from the beginning had no other aim than a war of extermination."

No doubt these words were to many German Catholics a definite shock. They had accepted other verbal forms to describe and evaluate what had been taking place. There were those who believed that the Church had been guilty of meddling in politics, and that the nazis were seeking merely to purge the body ecclesiastic of these abuses. Some perhaps still agreed with von Papen and various clerical leaders that National Socialism was in large measure a practical application of the Encyclicals *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*. Others wondered why a Rome-free German Catholic Church should not be established. In sum: Catholics had been split into various factions and it was now too late for any immediately effective opposition to be organized. Hitler had divided and he had thereby conquered.

### The principle of the big lie

In this campaign the most important nazi weapon was Hitler's Principle of the Big Lie. In his "Mein Kampf" he says that it is a "very sound principle" that "a definite factor in getting a lie believed is the size of the lie . . . for the broad mass of the people in the primitive simplicity of its heart more readily falls victim to a big lie than to a small one." In the light of this pronouncement and of his career to date it is not unreasonable to assume that he signed the Concordat in bad faith. It is clear that the lie that was the Concordat of 1933 won for him certain immediate advantages. By it he was able to enlist Christian feeling in the building up of national morale and in the development of his first anti-communist campaign. But whether lying on the grand scale will bring him success in his ultimate objectives of setting up a National Church and then of gradually absorbing this into National Socialism as the only officially recognized religion, can be doubted. The "Handbook of Modern Military Sciences," already referred to is in this matter completely opposed to the Fuehrer's Principle of the Big Lie. It states: "even the most obvious untruthfulness is readily believed by the unsuspecting masses of the population. But lies have short lives and their poisoned

arrow may fall back on him who used it first. Therefore sound propaganda, made to last, must use only allegations which are based on facts, and which will increase the confidence of public opinion. . . ." The alienation of the confidence of adults in Germany, non-Catholic as well as Catholic, by this official policy of falsehood may well prove to have been a major strategical error, if the German armies suffer serious reverses in the field.

In other respects, Hitler seems to be in agreement with German psychologists regarding the fundamentals of *Geistiger Krieg*. He has preceded and followed his overt attacks on the Church with barrages of words designed to moderate or avert Catholic resentment over those attacks and to make the official interpretation acceptable to the uncritical. Psychologists have emphasized that context determines meaning; an act which is reprehensible judged against the background of Christian faith may be an act of heroic virtue when evaluated according to Nazi postulates. If the supreme judge of good and evil is a genius-Fuehrer who must unthinkingly be obeyed, then the persecution of the Church is obviously commendable if it be in accordance with the Fuehrer's will. The remarkable success of the Nazis here recalls Hitler's cynical dictum: "By propaganda . . . even heaven can be palmed off on a people as hell. . . ."

Hitler has also agreed with German psychologists that the prestige of the enemy must be diminished and his resistance impaired. He has striven to do the first by the currency and immorality trials and, more subtly, by divorcing the Church from all significant participation in public life. He has attempted to accomplish the second by depriving the Church of its control over youth, by wrecking its channels of communication with the laity in general and by giving to National Socialism the status of a new religion.

One of the stock weapons for discrediting an opponent with the public is to charge him with addiction to enormities in his private life. The Nazis recognized that this method could be used against an entire church. It is certain that the currency and immorality trials presented a fantastically distorted picture of the Church as a whole. Yet the effect of the great publicity given these trials upon the propaganda-drugged masses is still a matter for debate.

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that the Church has not suffered gravely in prestige. Excluded from the vital arena of national affairs the Church has assumed for many the character of a vestigial remain. It has become the sign of the "realist" who seeks Party favor to renounce his membership in this antiquated organization. In Austria during the first six weeks after annexation, 46,000 Catholics publicly left the Church.

The Nazi assault on the material strength of

the Church has been given a simple rationalization. Religion, it is stated, has to do exclusively with other-worldly affairs; National Socialism is concerned with the practical problems of life here and now. Goebbels puts it briefly: "Let the Churches serve God; we serve the people." The Nazis repeat the slogan of Bebel: "We leave the sky to the sparrows." At the same time Hitler proclaims, "The National Socialist State is committed to positive Christianity." "Positive" Christianity appears to mean the charitable, educational and other socially valuable work done by the Church. Once such activities have been completely taken over by the Government, the good Party member can see no reason whatever for the continuance of the Church. Why, he asks, should an institution be maintained which serves merely as a school of esoteric piety and as a debating club for theologians?

"Youth belongs to us," Goebbels declared in 1935; "we will surrender our right to none." That Goebbels meant exactly what he said is revealed in the Pastoral Letter of the German Bishops released July 6, 1941. "We have lost our schools," the Bishops say, "and now our kindergartens must be closed." The importance of this loss can be judged from the fact that in May, 1931, there were 15,256 Catholic schools in Germany, exclusive of the Saar territory. The spirit in which the denominational schools have been destroyed can easily be gathered from the words of Rosenberg: "The curriculum of all categories in our schools has already been so far reformed in an anti-Christian and anti-Jewish spirit that the generation which is growing up will be protected from the black swindle."

An organization without an adequate system of communication is roughly comparable to a man whose nervous system has been damaged. Lesions that have destroyed sensory nerves produce anaesthesias, blindness, for example, or deafness; lesions that break down motor nerves result in paralysis. The German Catholic press has virtually been annihilated. Sermons are subject to severe censorship. More than one priest has found that his advice to a parishioner has been reported to the Gestapo, and that he himself is condemned to a concentration camp for sabotage. Social contact with the laity has been made more and more difficult. In short, the eyes of the clergy have been blindfolded and their ears have been muffled; their tongues have been rendered all but useless.

National Socialism is already the religion of Party members. These converts to the new cult are expected to act as missionaries. The private instructions for Storm Troopers warn that "we must beware of attacking these alien philosophies [i.e., Protestant and Catholic Christianity] by mentioning them or subjecting their customs to public criticism. We suppress them by the force of our faith that finds expression in our own usage."



*The making of pagans*

These rites of the new religion are to be substituted gradually for those of Christianity. Just as Christian customs were superimposed upon those of ancient paganism and imperceptibly transformed some and rejected others, so the practices of the new paganism are to supplant those of Christianity. Leaders of the Hitler Youth are instructed to see to it that the boys are so tired by Saturday evening that they cannot attend Christian services on Sunday. Christmas is to become a celebration of the winter solstice; the people are to ascend the mountains—in particular the Hesselberg which Hitler has proclaimed a sacred mountain—and there kindle great fires of purification. Pagan rituals for weddings and funerals are to be encouraged. Old sacred stones are to be restored as holy places; National Socialist shrines or "political churches" are to be constructed, or Christian churches are to be adapted for this purpose.

While popular religion is largely a matter of participating in customary overt actions, it is not entirely that. Even though the general public is not distinguished by a passionate interest in theology it does require some theological concepts, and some verbal formulations of the meaning of the communal behavior that constitutes its way of life. This formulation need not be elaborate since the nazi masses are to think, not with their heads, but with their German blood. The three mysteries of blood, race and soil are central. The primary dogma is the fuhrer-principle, the proposition that the leader must be blindly obeyed because he is the incarnation of "eternal" Germany. Hitler, Germany-made-flesh, and the nazi hierarchy watch over the people; the faithful can be certain that they are in good hands. Goebbels has solemnly proclaimed: "We feel ourselves to be political chaplains of the People and are persuaded that it must be our task to lessen and mitigate the cares with which the soul of our People is burdened."

For the élite who are to function as leaders, this authoritarian treatment is not deemed sufficient. In order that they may fight effectively for the nazi millennium these men are given systematic instruction in the philosophy of National Socialism. They are told frankly, and made to realize, that Christianity lays claim not only to a world beyond but to this world also; Christian ethics are intended to regulate all conduct, on the ground that earthly activity is only a means to eternal salvation. Christianity is therefore a rival and more inclusive totalitarianism, and, as Hitler has clearly seen and admitted, there can be no peace between two such world-views.

These leaders are to be trained not only for the work of transforming Christian customs but also for the related task of transforming Christian verbal symbols. By this means the gains made in altering behavior are strengthened and preserved.

The Encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* objects to the "revelation" of race and blood and the history of a people; to "faith" in a people's destiny; to the "immortality" of a people; to Germanic "grace." Such changes in the traditional meanings of these terms are called "this confusion of ideas," "an abuse of our religious vocabulary," "this plunder of sacred things." The concern of the Pope testifies to the power of this psychological weapon. By preserving Christian terminology the nazis maintain a sense of continuity with the immediate past; there is no widespread realization that the old terms have been emptied of their content and are now refilled with Hitlerian theology.

What the outcome of this *Geistiger Krieg* will be for Christianity in the Reich and in the occupied territories it would be foolhardy to predict. But the intention of the nazis is clear: they are determined to continue the campaign until "One fine day the Church will find itself an insignificant group, a *Verein* for . . . dreamers with one foot in the grave. . . . Left alone it will die in the next generation."

*Views & Reviews*

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

AMONG many other statements issued by groups and organizations seeking to interest the American public and to obtain support for the policies or plans or ideals favored by such groups, none is more important than that issued by the Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion, whose second annual meeting opens at Columbia University in New York on September 8 to 12. It informs those interested—and those who ought to be interested—of the admirable purposes of this organization, which expects that "thirty-five theologians representing the three chief denominations are among the two hundred leading scientists, educators and religionists of the United States and Canada who will participate in the proceedings." The main subject this year is to be "Science, Philosophy and Religion in Their Relations to the Democratic Way of Life." More than a thousand scholars are expected to attend. September 11, the last day of discussion, is to be set aside for the examination of the "religious background of democratic ideas," when reports will be presented which give the results of collective research efforts in dealing with these fundamentally important themes during the past twelve months." Faculty members of Fordham University, Yale, the Andover Newton Theological School and Duke University will present the reports which have been drawn up by a group of 120 scholars since the 1940 conference, and which will make "suggestions and recommendations for the stabilization of our spiritual front."

"It is assumed," the statement quotes from Mr. Van Wyck Brooks, one of the founders of the conference, who,



with Dr. George N. Shuster, will preside over the session of the conference which is to discuss the stake of art and literature in the preservation of democracy, "that the scholars who will participate, whether scientists, philosophers or theologians, are increasingly conscious of their collective responsibility for some measure of common leadership in American life and thought. The conference recognizes," he adds, "that our failure to integrate science, philosophy and religion in relation to traditional ethical values and the democratic way of life have been catastrophic for civilization." The recognition of this catastrophic failure was confessed at the first conference, a year ago, which constituted, says the statement, a historical event, because, again to quote Mr. Brooks, "for the first time in the history of American culture eminent scholars of widely differing interests, convictions and faiths found themselves united . . . jealous, of course, for the autonomy of each discipline and method, but desirous, above all, for some clear definition of fundamental accord . . . areas and levels of agreement at least wide enough to constitute an effective philosophy of American Democracy." Therefore, this year "the task will be mainly to explore the ground within each discipline with the object of integrating its own approach to the democratic ideology. A common attitude to and definition of democracy, equally acceptable by scientists, philosophers and religionists and equally to be defended by all of them, will be sought."

It is to be hoped that readers of *THE COMMONWEAL* in and near New York will attend the conference, which is not likely to attract much continuous attention in the bulk of the New York press, but whose subjects and methods in handling the vitally important themes to be studied are of paramount importance to this nation. Sometimes, I must confess, the multiplicity of the groups and movements competing for attention today remind me gloomily of the story of the tower of Babel; but among them all, none, surely, is more worthy of respect and interest than the conference which is to meet at Columbia. It may already be too late to achieve the needed unity of minds as to the definition and the best methods of working a democratic society, among scientists and philosophers and religious leaders, but even if as a punishment for our failure heretofore to gain such unity we must go through the same process of intellectual as well as religious and civic tyranny and persecution that now holds so much of the world in its grip, we must still plan for the future beyond the breakdown, and work together to win our slow and painful way toward its light.

## The Screen

### *The Evil That Men Do*

"TAKE us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes." That is the Old Testament verse from which Playwright Lillian Hellman took the title for her penetrating study of a greed infested, money mad family of the deep South in 1900. But this could have been a family of any time, any place, for the avaricious Hubbards have been always

with us. Some men will seek to eat all the fruits of the earth while other men will watch them. It was to stir up the watchers that Miss Hellman wrote her play about this particular family whose methods of lying, stealing, taking advantage of the downtrodden workman, yes even of killing, are exposed in the action of a few days that spill the accumulation of venom that these Hubbards secrete. From the successful Hellman play, Samuel Goldwyn has produced a film that is even stronger and more stirring than the play, a film that is outstanding not only in this year but in any cinema decade. Using the screenplay which Lillian Hellman herself made from the original, William Wyler has directed a motion picture of intelligence and uncompromising realism that should satisfy even those self-styled critics who make a fetish of deploring the state of movies. Mr. Wyler follows closely the original stage production, perhaps at times a little too closely when the film becomes talky. But never once does "*The Little Foxes*" fail to hold one's interest in its entire two-hour run.

No small credit should go to the good cast who turn in a series of first-rate performances under Mr. Wyler's direction. Bette Davis, again in one of her viciously mean rôles, but this time entirely without her usual mannerisms, plays Regina Giddens with the same grasping vitality with which Tallulah Bankhead presented this hateful Hubbard sister on the stage. As her patient, knowing, stricken husband, Herbert Marshall strikes an interesting contrast. But new to the screen are five actors from the stage who make outstanding contributions to this picture through their masterful handling of difficult rôles: Charles Dingle, Dan Duryea and Carl Benton Reid as the male members of this rapacious gang of foxes; Patricia Collinge as the unforgettable, aristocratic Birdie married to one of the Hubbards and driven to dipsomania by her unhappiness in this den of greed and hate; and lovely Teresa Wright as Regina's daughter, the only one in the family who is left untainted after the Hubbards' evil work boils over in their effort to outsmart even each other. That this rôle of the daughter has been emphasized in the film and even strengthened by the addition of a new character, a young reporter (Richard Carlson) who aids her escape, is most assuredly not to the film's discredit. It does, as a matter of fact, add to the realism of the whole by giving a life-force to carry on after the Hubbards have burned each other out. "*The Little Foxes*" is not a pleasant picture, but one that is to be seen and reckoned with. One department greatly responsible for the film's success that must not be neglected is Gregg Toland's superb photography. Action is injected as often as possible by his fine moving camera; and his closeups and interesting angle shots of streets, rooms, staircases and particularly of faces add to the understanding of what goes on in the home and minds of this breed of little foxes.

Although the action of "*Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*" takes place at practically the same time as "*The Little Foxes*," the treatment in these two studies in evil is as different as day and night. When Robert Louis Stevenson hurriedly wrote his phantasmagorical allegory in the '80s, he had no idea that it would still be the center of attention

some fifty years later. Ever since Richard Mansfield's appearance in the dual rôle, audiences of stage and screen versions have been held spellbound by watching Dr. Jekyll's goings on, that separated good and bad in man and finally resulted in the victory of evil by Mr. Hyde's refusal to stay in the bottle. But this third cinematization of the novel tries to go modern by mixing dashes of Freud and surrealism with the Stevenson horror and morality; and the merging jumble proves that Stevenson should be played straight or left to the Victorians and R.L.S. fans. When I first heard that Spencer Tracy was going to portray Hyde without the conventional horrific makeup, I had great expectations for what surprises in subtlety the picture might have in store; but somewhere along the line the plans were changed. Mr. Tracy now appears with the usual hideous Hyde visage (nothing approaching the John Barrymore or Frederic March makeup however) and with much more ham than Mr. Tracy is wont to go in for. He is not entirely to blame. John Lee Mahin's script emphasizes heaving, panting and hissing; and Director Victor Fleming tries to cover up for the long, dull stretches of wordy exposition by including as much rough stuff as possible. The audience is inclined to giggle a bit at Mr. Hyde's histrionics, spitting and uncouth ravings. But at one characterization the audience is neither bored nor giggly—that is Ingrid Bergman's performance as the barmaid whom the sinful Hyde uses and torments. The beautiful Miss Bergman sets a new high even for her own high acting standards as she movingly portrays the victim of Hyde's wickedness. In the uninterestingly conceived rôle of the sweet, pretty girl of good Dr. Jekyll's desires, Lana Turner does the best she can. Stevenson would probably be surprised at some of the added symbols and changes made in his story, but he would also be pleased with the excellent photography in the film: the montage shots in the metamorphosis sequences; the shadowy pictures of Jekyll among the fascinating retorts, test tubes and bubbling chemicals; the scenes of Hyde with cape a-flying as he flees through the London streets. He would probably agree that the film, even with its absurd melodramatics, would give an audience a few twinges of conscience, and that the moral is still the same. Don't monkey with evil or it will get you in the end.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

## Books of the Week

### Businessman in Nazi Paris

*France on Berlin Time.* Thomas Kernan. Lippincott. \$2.75.

MR. THOMAS KERNAN, the publisher of the French edition of *Vogue* and the representative in France of the Condé Nast publications, had left Paris on June 11 as the German invader was about to tighten his hold on the capital. One month later he returned there, being told that the German authorities' advice to its inhabitants was "business as usual." Then began an endless wrangle with the Propaganda Staff of Dr. Goebbels. He was never allowed to resume his job. However, he did not waste his time. From a vantage post he observed

at close quarters the legal plundering of France by the occupant and the easy and ready methods used to install nazi masters in every business of importance.

In 1919 the "Allied and Associated Powers," wishing to exact reparations from vanquished Germany, voluntarily bound themselves to the rule that in Germany the tax-payer ought not to give more of his money than in any other country, and they plunged headlong into the senseless venture which aimed at "commercializing" the German debt. The nazi authorities have refused to take a leaf out of that book. Instead, they keep on compelling France to pay 400,000,000 francs a day to meet their military expenses on her territory. Part of that sum only—one-half, perhaps less—is actually being spent for that purpose. The balance goes to purchasing anything that can be bought and to raking up industrial stocks and bonds. The result, after fourteen months, is the economic impoverishment and enslavement of the country from the inside in addition to military and political control applied from the outside. Mr. Kernan tells that sad story in vivid terms and continuously strikes the human note. He does not write from hearsay. He was on the spot and knows what he is talking about. He deserves great praise for the volume of evidence he has collected first hand.

Why didn't he limit the scope of his book to that field which was his own? Why did he attempt to set up a political background and to risk a trip into an area so unfamiliar to him that, more often than not, he gets off the right track? We learn from him that Laval is a passive anglophobe and Darlan, an active one. As a matter of fact, Laval, had he remained in office, would have achieved much more than his light-headed successor in the way of cooperation with Germany, because abler and more passionate. Reading the judgment formed by Mr. Kernan on that shady politician, I had the impression that the foolish and self-seeking brothers, General and Ambassador de Chambrun, or the son of the former, were responsible for his political education. If he really wanted to turn to that family for guidance, he would surely have been wiser to sit at the feet of their elder brother, the Marquis.

Two errors (among others) call for correction. It is nonsense to say that the British Government backed with its good money the popular front of Léon Blum. The general election of May, 1936, and the ensuing sitdown strikes brought very little comfort to such men as Neville Chamberlain and Lord Halifax, and they speedily reduced Léon Blum to complete impotence as regards assistance to republican Spain. They never had illusions about the statesmanship of the Socialist leader. The origin of the legend is that, later on, when he visited London, Léon Blum, personally, was given a friendly welcome, a welcome that was denied to others. Why? Because he has charming manners in contrast to the rugged behavior of many French politicians, and can be a pleasant guest. Blum the aristocrat, not Blum the socialist, was entertained by Lord Halifax and other conservatives at small dinner parties.

As to Mme. de Portes, she must not be mixed up with the Marquise de Crussol and other ladies of the same brand. She really had an influence which, in the tragic circumstances of June, 1940, perhaps proved fatal to France and to the Republic. The rest of the lot had no opportunity effectively to tamper with national affairs.

Mr. Kernan, in fine, advises the French people to reshape their republic on the American pattern, once they



have been freed from the German octopus and have a chance. Does he really believe that it could work?

PERTINAX.

#### CRITICISM

*The Wound and the Bow.* Edmund Wilson. Houghton Mifflin. \$3.00.

MR. WILSON'S most penetrating book since "Axel's Castle," with a title out of Sophocles, deals mainly with the relation between creative activity and maladjustment, using as exponents such writers as Dickens, Kipling, Casanova, Mrs. Wharton (a nice juxtaposition, that one!), James Joyce and our national Hemingway. The opening essay on Dickens is almost a small volume in itself, and is tops on the subject, so far as this reviewer is concerned. The latter has often asked himself just why Mr. Wilson has always seemed to him the best literary critic writing in the English tongue, unless it be for the unscientific reason that he usually finds himself in complete agreement with almost all of Mr. Wilson's judgments. But there is something else, and this book is a good test of the balance. Its three hundred pages represent a maximum of wit, erudition, literary tact, delicate profundity, a tireless search for the right word, the unerring value. It is in the best tradition of great literary criticism, and appears more Latin, or French in quality than Anglo-Saxon. But then we can do with more of that sort of thing in American criticism; in fact we can do with a whole lot of it. It may even be a pity that Mr. Wilson should occupy in this respect a position of somewhat lonely preeminence.

When I hinted that Mr. Wilson seems to me like no other critic, English or American, I forgot Professor F. L. Lucas and the late Havelock Ellis. But he is much less restricted in his interests than the Cambridge don, and never lets himself momentarily gush and coo like the author of "The Psychology of Sex." His approach, however, is mainly psychologic (and sometimes psychopathic) and never more so than in his classical study of Charles Dickens. Considering the buckets of sheer rot, wet and dry, that have been poured on the tomb of that great writer, Mr. Wilson's essay is an eye-opener and a gem. He begins by intimating that Dickens has never been understood, especially by Dickens. Even in his lifetime he was being travestied into one of those Victorian Aunt Sallies, good meat for the Strachey of the future who like to fustigate crinolined big bottoms. In that connection, Mr. Wilson has found the *mot juste* for the late G. K. Chesterton, who adored Dickens. "He turned out in his book some of the best work of which he was capable . . . but his writing is always melting away into that peculiar pseudo-poetic booziness which ignores the most obtrusive actualities." It is Mr. Wilson's purpose to make Dickens "loom very large in the literature of the West." He certainly succeeds.

Mr. Wilson, so far as I know, is the first writer except myself (not in print) to state the obvious thing about Dickens: that he was not one man, but two, and this in succession; that he was first a popular writer of the grossest melodrama and farce, and second, a less popular and very great literary artist who just missed being the Balzac of Britain—with much that Balzac never had. The Chestertons, who had the nerve to call themselves the "real Dickensians," never saw this distinction. For them, their hero was cut out of one indivisible piece of tough

plum pudding; he was the Dickens of Pickwick and Nickleby and Chuzzlewit and Sairey Gamp and the great comics. "It is a book that bores most Dickensians," wrote Chesterton fatuously of the great "Little Dorrit," that masterpiece of what Arnold Bennett called "thick artistic gloom." Chronology here assists a more accurate estimate, and the fact is that, so far as the art of the English novel is concerned, Dickens was very early in the game. Before him there are only Defoe, Richardson, Fielding and the rest of that crew, Walter Scott. He used them all, improved on them, and then, in a series of superb social and psychologic novels—"Dombey and Son," "Bleak House," "Little Dorrit," "Great Expectations," "Our Mutual Friend" (despite its nasty realism) and "Edwin Drood"—went his conquering and original way. In other words, he was first picaresque, then sentimental, then historical (*vide* "A Tale of Two Cities") finally Balzacian and even symbolic, some twenty years before the word was invented. In no other country, in no other tongue, is there the record of a more striking development. Nay, he was Proustian before Proust, and even Freudian forty years before Freud in that startling chapter from "Little Dorrit" called "The History of a Self-Tormenter," which, had it been written today by E. M. Forster or some Russian, would have evoked squeals of veneration from all Bloomsbury.

And all the time, according to Mr. Wilson, Dickens was dominated by a kind of double *trauma*, culminating in the unfinished "Edwin Drood," and due to a miserable childhood, in which he was at once victim and rebel, and which caused him to identify himself with criminals, who are also rebels against institutions, whether good or bad—and in Victorian England they were sometimes very bad indeed. Chesterton would have it that he was the great glorifier of the good old middle class John Bull, and Maurois has echoed Chesterton as he always echoes every English critic from Strachey to Ethel Mayne. The fact remains that in these magnificent later books, Dickens was the most devastating enemy of the commercial middle class since Christ scourged the Pharisees. Paradoxically enough, this profoundly and secretly anti-social novelist caused several social reforms; and here the sentimentalists à la Chesterton can get to work on him. He attacked this or that shocking Victorian abuse, and here and there they sometimes vanished, almost overnight. But this is by the way. The main thing about Dickens is not that he became "the master of all hearts" (in Taine's phrase) but the master of all writers: witness Daudet and Dostoevski; and in comparison, his smart modern critics seem like termites at the foot of a pyramid.

CUTHBERT WRIGHT.

#### EDUCATION

*The Child and You.* F. J. Kieffer, S.M. Bruce. \$2.00.

IT IS a brave pedagogue who will write about authority at an era in the world's history when we seem to have too much of it! Francis Joseph Kieffer, of the Society of Mary, writes convincingly, helpfully, beautifully for teachers and parents on the nature of authority, on conditions for the proper exercise of authority and results to be achieved by the exercise of authority. He expounds a gentle philosophy of education, a fine psychology of leadership.

The book came to me, a teacher, at the close of a school year, as challenging to my professional past as a retreat would have been; or rather, since a teacher's professional

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and spiritual life are inseparable, as a sort of complement to a retreat. I found myself underscoring passages in approbation, as I would have applauded a fine lecture, but I had to pause every now and again for an examen of conscience. "We will deal less with establishing methods, and more with creating those dispositions in the educator and in the child which will facilitate the work of education." Here's a challenge!—Have I been content with "certain pedagogical recipes generally thought to be of unfailing efficacy?" I once knew a teacher who was a sorry failure just because she had been told about something called the "Thought Method," which became her formula and her doom.

A chapter on the nature of authority contains the most specific and helpful suggestions I have yet seen for those about to assume authority as teachers, priests or leaders. To some educators of an older school I would like to have recommended a chapter on respecting the child. It is free from faddism, but wholesomely appreciative of all that is fine in modern pedagogy, though he warns against "adding quantity to the mass of professional theses without improving the quality of the contribution to education." "We must know the child, respect the child, love the child" he tells us, but he would have us learn to know the child "from sympathetic observation, because the educator will not act simply from scientific curiosity—but from love of the child," "the child who is future citizen to the state to which he is to add not merely another unit, but a value."

"Duly with a vivid conception of duty and responsibility, good common sense, tact and diplomacy and above all a great supernatural love for the child" can problems of authority be solved.

The book abounds in effective phrases, each of which might have been expanded by a less skillful writer into a paragraph or a chapter. He has a sense of economy in design comparable to the aristocratic simplicity of very expensive tailored costumes.

"Authority is the ascendancy of one who commands, but it is also that ascendancy accepted by the subject." False concepts of authority "result in a final automatism, not a state, but a puppet show where citizen marionettes are manipulated by an absolute ruler."

The translator, Gustavus J. Hetterich, also of the Society of Mary, has written a short introductory biography of the late, distinguished teacher who wrote the book. But the most vivid biography is read between the lines of the work itself. What a splendid teacher he must have been! There are occasional newly coined words that seem unwarranted, but the translation on the whole is satisfying.

JOHANNA DONIAT.

#### BRIEFER

*The Oxford Companion to American Literature.* James D. Hart. Oxford. \$5.00.

THIS third volume in the Oxford Companion series (the others are to Classical Literature, English Literature) is, like its predecessors, an invaluable reference book. It contains thumb nail sketches—thousands of them—of books, authors, magazines, plays, theatrical groups, even a few places associated with American literature. There must be omissions—there could not help but be—yet if there are, they in no way make the book less good, for there is so much here that many an omission could be forgiven. Certainly Catholic authors have been treated fairly. Living authors are included as well as dead.



## The Inner Forum

WHEN American sailors are cruising on the high seas, there is so much to do of an exacting kind that they have precious little time to think about themselves or to feel sorry for themselves. They know today that drills are not simply book-rules put into action; they feel these are but brief rehearsals of a show that for their ship may mean, at some time, success or death.

But when the Pacific Fleet returns to Pearl Harbor and liberty call is sounded, it is quite a different story. The greater part of the United States fleet is now based on the Island of Oahu. The scenery and the climate are indeed superb. But from the Navy Yard it is a ride of nearly ten miles to Honolulu. And there is not much for a sailor to do after he gets there. He has already gone on the chaplain's round-the-island-sightseeing-party; he has visited the pineapple cannery; he finds the Army and Navy YMCA, in spite of its excellent appointments, too crowded. And Columbus Hall, recently fitted out by the Catholics, he enjoys for an hour or so. The beach at Waikiki is still another long bus ride from the heart of town. He is consequently apt to do what a young sailor was caught doing a few days ago. Friends of mine recently discovered a young fellow sitting in solitary doldrums on a rock near where the sea waves were beaking. An elderly lady in the party feared the boy might be in distress. She had the driver stop the car and asked, "Son, can we do anything for you?" The young man-o-war's-man turned his head toward her and sadly replied: "No, thank you, Ma'am." Then he turned his eyes again toward the billowy horizon and with his head in his hands he complained: "I'm just lookin' at San Francisco."

I am now Fleet Chaplain of the Pacific fleet, serving on the staff of Vice Admiral William S. Pye, U.S.N. Ordinarily I should be working and living in the flagship U.S.S. *California*, but the Admiral has assigned me to duty in Honolulu to coordinate for the navy the work of the Mayor's Entertainment Committee, headed by Miss Nell Findley and Mrs. J. Platt Cooke. The Army and Navy YMCA generously gave me and my two yeomen an office where I meet daily with the Mayor's Committee. It is my job to assign allocations to the forces afloat and to endeavor to spread the invitations so that all the ships, big and small, get a fair break.

The vast majority of our men abhor the cheap allurements of the local saloons. They much prefer the sort of party which the Catholic Ladies Aid frequently gives for over a hundred fleet men. Buses take the men to the Capitol grounds in the heart of the city whence the women drive them over the Nuuanu Pali to the country estates of the Dillinghams, the Castles and the Cookes. They spend the day playing softball and paddle tennis and swimming in the surf. And they enjoy the home-cooked chow which the women bring with them in their station wagons. A band from one of the battleships usually goes along and plays for dancing.

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ters of the first families are always on hand to greet the  
men and they are agreed that the sailor is tops as a dancer.  
The men appreciate the tone of refinement that always  
prevails.

Honolulu hospitality embraces a wide field in its variety.  
A studious effort is made to give the men a chance to spend  
their liberty hours in accordance with their individual  
tastes and habits. Dancing, which is universally popular,  
affording as it does a chance to meet an attractive young  
lady, is however difficult to supply on Oahu. The most  
important form of entertainment takes place in the homes  
of the local people. Along with frequent picnics at beach  
homes, supper parties in town are arranged for smaller  
groups. This requires a more careful selection of per-  
sonnel. It is here that the chaplains, with their intimate  
knowledge of their shipmates, are of especial help in filling  
the quotas. Men in great numbers are invited to concerts  
and dramatic programs staged by racial groups of the city.  
The high schools invite the men to hear their a capella  
choirs; the university gives special performances enacted  
by dramatic clubs; the Honolulu Theatre Guild invites  
the fleet men to its dress rehearsals. During the coming  
season the Guild will take its five regular productions to  
the new theatre at the Navy Yard, and it also will pro-  
duce revivals of old melodramas and original musical  
revues. The new arena at the Yard can accommodate  
6,000 men. It boasts a large portable stage adequate for  
Broadway hits. The big arena will be used also for ships'  
happy hours and smokers, and it will afford an excellent  
chance for talented bluejackets to join up with the Theatre  
Guild in productions especially designed to amuse navy  
personnel. My office has a list of all the talented men of  
the fleet. They are standing by for the green light.

I am beginning my twenty-fifth year of naval service  
as a chaplain, and I feel that my present assignment is a  
natural culmination of years of that sort of week-day work.  
As a chaplain, it always was natural that I should be busy  
with smokers, happy hours, dramatics, athletics, sight-  
seeing parties to complement the more specifically religious  
functions of my navy apostolate. Most of the chaplain's  
time aboard ship is spent in personal interviews with the  
men, but he can and does achieve worthy results by pro-  
moting recreational activity of the sort that endows the  
young man-o'-war's-man with a "mens sana in corpore  
sano." This is a preview of the USO.

W. A. MAGUIRE.

## CONTRIBUTORS

Theodore MAYNARD is just correcting proofs for his history of  
the Church in the United States which will be published this  
fall by Macmillan. He has to his credit a considerable number  
of books of which the last is a biography of Queen Elizabeth.  
He is also a poet and lecturer.

Liam O'CONNOR teaches psychology at Hunter College in New  
York City.

PERTINAX is the well-known pen name of a French journalist  
and political commentator whose feature articles have long  
appeared not only in French and British, but also in American  
newspapers, particularly the New York Times. His account  
of the fall of France is scheduled for publication within the  
next few months.

Cuthbert WRIGHT teaches at Assumption College, Worcester,  
Mass.

Johanna DONIAT teaches art in the Chicago public school system  
and takes an active part in the Catholic intellectual life in  
that city.

Rev. William A. MAGUIRE is a Captain in the Chaplain Corps of  
the US Navy, in which service he has spent over a score of  
years.



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# THE LAST ROSE

Labor Day for many Americans means getting back to workaday activities. It is the end of sunny weekends, the beginning of new resolutions and new plans. School will soon be on. Labor Day still is a pivotal point in the lives of many Americans. And out in the wider world this year, September is a month for even greater transition. Pleas for greater participation of the United States in the wars in Europe and the Far East are on the increase, while the imminence of rains and frost and snows brings German operations among the Soviets to their most critical juncture. This sense of change is well reflected in next week's issue of **THE COMMONWEAL**.

**MEN OF THE AXIS ARMIES** by J. Paar-Cabrera takes up the vital question of the morale of those forces which are meeting heavier and heavier opposition as the fall of 1941 gets under way. It is principally a study of the leaders of the German army by name and by position, a factor by which to adjudge the increasing rumors of German loss of morale now reaching our shores. Mr. Cabrera says, "Thus the grim password of the German soldier of the beginning of the second world war, 'if we don't get what we want now, we never will' has been substituted by the belief, 'we must remain masters of continental Europe or suffer as individuals to the end of our days and die as a nation'."

**DUTY OF INTERVENTION?** by Florence D. Cohalan is an examination of the contentions of the Fight for Freedom Committee and others of like mind that Catholics have the moral obligation to work for active American intervention in this shooting war. Father Cohalan asks on what authority Catholics are supposed to have

this duty and then goes on to enumerate the ways in which he believes American Catholics should participate in this tragic struggle. A timely discussion of the question which is agitating so many Americans in various parts of the country as summer ends.

**TATA VASCO** by Otto Mayer-Serra. This summer has chalked up a considerable increase in Pan-American plans and activities. A perusal of the publishers' announcements of fall books indicates a greater number devoted both to Latin America as a whole and to the individual countries than ever before. **THE COMMONWEAL** in line with its policy of forwarding this movement is happy to publish next week an extraordinary account of Mexico's Catholic Opera which was recently produced in the Palace of Fine Arts at Mexico City. From the author's not uncritical account, it must have been an amazing performance. Its official acceptance also has broad implications.

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